Amid hurricane’s devastation, Puerto Ricans’ spirit seen shining through

BY WALLICE J. DE LA VEGA

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (CNS) — Above all material and financial considerations after Hurricane Maria’s severe damage in Puerto Rico, one must highlight the brotherly spirit shown by the island’s people during the ongoing recovery period, said the island’s top Catholic pastor.

Although the church’s financial burden has obviously become heavier as it strives to meet the increased emergency material needs of the faithful, it is the people’s “huge capability for solidarity” that shines through in this disaster, Archbishop Roberto Gonzalez Nieves of San Juan told Catholic News Service Oct. 25.

“There are so many helping gestures, like people who don’t know each other but share ‘our daily bread,’ and neighbors sitting down in the dark out on the street chatting,” said Archbishop Gonzalez.

Due to slow government response to Hurricane Maria’s victims in Puerto Rico, there has been an increase in church and neighborhood or town groups banding together to clear remote areas.

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (CNS) — Archbishop Roberto Gonzalez Nieves of San Juan told the All-Schools Mass with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades and the priests from their schools. This year’s Mass took place on Thursday, Oct. 26, at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.

The risers in the room were filled with children in their uniform polos and khaki pants or school skirts, but the clothing of the fourth-grade students in the chairs in front of the altar varied. Some were dressed as martyrs, while others were dressed as religious brothers and sisters; all personified saints or those on their way to sainthood. The students had made ready for this day by choosing a saint and researching him or her, and shared the story of their saint with their classmates or their other schoolmates.

Melissa White, a fourth-grade teacher at St. Joseph Hessen Cassel School, Fort Wayne, shared how she and her students had delved into the study of some of the church’s most holy figures. “We’ve been discussing how you become a saint,” she said, and besides this, they researched and had a weekly assignment about their saints, which they shared with the class. The day of the All-Schools Mass, the students dressed like their saints and visited the younger grades, sharing information about them.

One of White’s students, Mara Striker, explained that she dressed like St. Agatha because, “She’s the patron saint of breast cancer.” Another student, Malachi Blaumbo, said that he chose St. Padre Pio because he was interesting and “he loved helping other people.”

Every year, students from Catholic schools in the Fort Wayne area come together to celebrate the All-Schools Mass with Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades and the priests from their schools. This year’s Mass took place on Thursday, Oct. 26, at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.

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Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades interviews a group of fourth-grade students dressed as Franciscan saints during his homily for an All-Schools Mass at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne on Oct. 26.
Bishop Rhoades spoke with the students about the church’s saints, but first addressed the Gospel reading of the day. The Gospel began with Jesus telling his disciples: “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!” (Luke 12:49). The bishop explained that Jesus was so eager to save us, to do His Father’s will, to set the world on fire with God’s love. He explained that this fire is very destructive, in that it destroys sin and evil. However, fire also gives light, like the flame of a candle in a dark room. The fire that Jesus sets gives light to the world.

The bishop explained that Jesus did not want the fire of his love to be extinguished in the world when he ascended into heaven. He sent the Holy Spirit, who descended as tongues of fire upon the disciples at Pentecost so that the fire of his love would spread throughout the world.

The bishop then addressed all the eighth-grade students, telling them that they too would receive the fire of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of confirmation. The Holy Spirit would help them to spread the faith and the love of Christ.

“Every saint spread the fire of God’s love in the world,” Bishop Rhoades said. He explained that these holy men, women and children were on fire with God’s love and spread his love through their words and heroic deeds.

After this, the bishop turned the focus of his homily onto the fourth-grade students. He told them that during the opening procession he had looked among them and tried to guess which saint they were dressed as. He joked that he “thought he was in a Franciscan monastery,” as he had noticed many students dressed as Franciscan saints.

Then he asked for all the children dressed as St. Francis, St. Clare and other Franciscan saints to join him in front of the altar for a moment.

He talked to two students dressed as St. Anthony, asking them how the saint spread God’s word. The students said that he spread love through giving to the poor. The bishop said he heard that many of the schools had recently held collections of food, money and other items for those affected by the hurricanes, and that this act was an example of spreading God’s love; and that every school in the diocese tries to spread the fire of God’s love through making sacrifices.

Bishop Rhoades also spoke to a student dressed as St. Clare. He explained that St. Clare was a contemplative nun, meaning that she spent much of her time in prayer. He told the children that prayer is another way to spread God’s love. “Praying for others is an act of love,” the bishop said.

“We can spread the fire of God’s love in prayer and good deeds,” he said. He asked some of the other students gathered with him how they could spread this fire at school. Their suggestions included spreading the Gospel, sharing the teachings of Jesus and spreading goodness.

“Our mission is to spread the fire of God’s love on the earth,” which Jesus came to earth to do, he said. He explained that there is so much hate, selfishness and violence in the world that the need to spread God’s love is urgent. The bishop ended the homily with a line from the prayer “Come Holy Spirit,” which he had the students repeat: “Come Holy Spirit, enkindle in us the fire of your love.”

Students from Bishop Luers High School, Fort Wayne, sing in the choir for the All-Schools Mass that was attended by hundreds of students from Catholic schools in the Fort Wayne area on Oct. 26.

Dressed as saints, fourth-grade students bring baskets of food donations to Bishop Rhoades during the offertory of the All-Schools Mass celebrated at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum.

Bishop Rhoades distributes holy Communion to fourth-grade “saints” during the Mass. At left, students from St. Mary School in Avilla drop food donations into barrels before celebrating the Mass.
Pope asks U.S. to welcome migrants, urges them to respect laws

BY JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES

ROME (CNS) — Pope Francis called on the people of the United States to welcome migrants and urged those who are welcomed to respect the laws of the country.

"To all people (of the U.S.) I ask: take care of the migrant, who is a promise of life for the future. To migrants: take care of the country that welcomes you; accept and respect its laws and walk together along that path of love," the pope said Oct. 26 during a live video conversation with teenagers from around the world.

Pope Francis was speaking with teens participating in a program of the international network of "Scholas Occurrentes." At the event, broadcast by the U.S. Spanish-language network Telemundo, the host asked the pope for a message to immigrants in the United States.

Many face difficulties after the Trump administration's recent call to tighten immigration laws by raising the standard of proof for asylum seekers and limit grants to so-called sanctuary cities.

Pope Francis said the U.S. bishops "have told me about what you suffer," and he is aware that "there are people that do not want you." "I am a son of immigrants. And if there weren't people who helped my father when he arrived at 22 years old, I would not be here today," the pope said.

The call to welcome the migrant and the stranger, he added, is not a personal request he made as pope but a mandate given "by someone much more important than myself."

"God said it and the Bible is clear," the pope said. "Receive the migrant, receive the refugee, because you too were a migrant and refugee from Egypt. Jesus was also a refugee; they wanted to cut the little child's head off."

While video chatting with students from Houston, the pope also was asked by the host of the event if he had a message for immigrant youths in the United States known as "Dreamers."

"The first thing I want to say is that I am praying for you and I am close to you. Secondly, continue dreaming. And lastly, be close to people who can help you and defend you at this juncture. Do not hate anyone; look for help from those who can defend you. I am praying for you."

Pope Francis also urged Europeans to welcome migrants and refugees who arrive on the southern border; cracking down by raising the standard of proof for asylum seekers and limit grants in the United States.

They are also "mestizos" ("mixed races") from the "great migrations of the barbarians and the Vikings."

"This isn't the time to pretend this is sterilized laboratory," the pope said. "This is the moment to receive, to embrace and — to those who arrive — to respect the rules of the country that welcomes you."

"To the migrants who suffer," the pope added, "know that the pope is very close to you. I accompany you and I am praying for you."

It remains important for our church to protect children and young persons from the evils of abuse. To abuse a child is a sin. The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend remains committed to upholding and following its guidelines, policies and procedures that were implemented for the protection of children and young people. These can be reviewed on the diocese’s website, www.diocesefwsb.org, under “Safe Environment.”

If you have reason to believe that a child may be a victim of child abuse or neglect, Indiana law requires that you report this to civil authorities. If you or someone you know was abused as a child or young person by an adult, you are encouraged to notify appropriate civil authorities of that abuse. In addition, if the alleged abuser is or was a priest or deacon of the Catholic Church, you are encouraged to contact Mary Glowaski, victim assistance coordinator, at 260-399-1458; or mglowaski@diocesefwsb.org; or Msgr. Robert Schulte, vicar general of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, at P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46801; 260-399-1419; or mraatz@fw.diocesefwsb.org. The diocese is committed to helping prevent the abuse or neglect of children and young people and to assist those who claim to have suffered harm as a result of such abuse.

I ntiemportante para nuestra iglesia proteger a los niños y jóvenes de los males del abuso. Abusar a un niño es pecado. La Diócesis de Fort Wayne-South Bend se compromete a mantener y seguir las reglas, políticas y procedimientos que fueron implementados para la protección de niños/niñas y personas jóvenes. Estos pueden leerse en la página web de la diócesis, www.diocesefwsb.org, bajo la sección “Ambiente Seguro” o “Safe Environment.”

Si usted tiene motivo de creer que un niño(a) es víctima de abuso o negligencia, la ley de Indiana requiere que usted reporte esto a las autoridades civiles. Si usted o alguien que usted conoce fue abusado, ya sea niño o persona joven, por un adulto, se le recomienda notificar a las autoridades civiles apropiadas de ese abuso. También, si el alegado abusador es o fue un sacerdote o diácono de la Iglesia Católica, le se le insta a comunicarse con Mary Glowaski, coordinadora de ayuda para víctimas, al 260-399-1458 o mglowaski@diocesefwsb.org; o con el Monseñor Robert Schulte, vicario general de la Diócesis de Fort Wayne-South Bend, al P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46801; 260-399-1419; o mraatz@fw.diocesefwsb.org. La diócesis se compromete a ayudar a prevenir el abuso o negligencia de niños y personas jóvenes y dar ayuda a quienes reclaman haber sufrido daño como el resultado de tal abuso.
Actor Mark Wahlberg’s faith journey leaves impression on young adults

BY joyce duriga

CHICAGO (CNS) — Hearing the faith journey of Hollywood actor and businessman Mark Wahlberg left an impression on the hearts of many young adults at the Archdiocese of Chicago's first (re)Encounter event Oct. 20 at the UIC Pavilion.

"It’s powerful for a celebrity to feel that way about religion," said Omar Lopez, 21, from St. Gall Parish. "For me, when I think about a celebrity, I think cockiness, selfishness, but to hear an artist say that he takes it so seriously, that’s an incredible feeling." Wahlberg left an impression on young adults and the community, Lopez said.

Wahlberg is a big name in Hollywood, so young adults felt more comfortable interacting with him, said Araya Kando of the Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Gewargis Cathedral, also connected to the actor's faith story.

"Actor Mark Wahlberg and Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago discuss faith and the life of young adults during a (re)Encounter event at the UIC Pavilion Oct. 20."

Wahlberg decided to turn his life around. "I'm a street kid from Dorchester, Massachusetts. Grew up in St. Greg's and St. William's parishes," he told the crowd. "Because his parents worked a lot, he was often unsupervised and took to running the streets.

"I ended up getting into a lot of trouble, incarcerated, time to just pray, that's an incredible feeling." Wahlberg, 46, said his big­gest mistake was quitting school. Despite having a successful career as an entertainer and businessman, that haunted him, so he got his GED at age 42.

That's why I start my day, every day, by getting on my hands and knees and starting a time of prayer and reading, reading Scripture. Then I feel like I can go out there and conquer the world, or at least do my job and give back because I’ve been blessed so much," Wahlberg said.

He keeps in daily touch with his parish priest from when he was growing up, Father Ed Flavin, who married him and his wife and all of his siblings and baptized his four children. When Wahlberg decided to turn his life around, the priest was one of the people he looked up to.

"Not that my life has been easy, he said. "The whole event is awesome. I love it. I really enjoyed the questions because I’ve asked these questions, like, ‘How do you forgive yourself?’" said Arroyo. "You just have to keep going every day. You just have to keep trying.”

"Actors like Wahlberg demonstrate that faith is not just a private matter but can change the rest of their lives," said Joyce Duriga, editor of the Chicago Catholic, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Everyone is Invited to Meet the Marian Family! Annual Open House for Prospective Students and their Families

Sunday, November 12 from 2:00-4:00 PM

Tour the building with a student ambassador
Preview the entire curriculum
Meet the administrators, teachers, and coaches
Talk to the students at work in the classrooms
View displays of the 30 clubs and organizations, as well as 25 sports
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Marian High School
1311 South Logan Street, Mishawaka, Indiana
574-259-5257
www.marianhs.org
Fort Wayne man finds possible relic of soon-to-be saint

BY RON BUSCH

Just about everyone has found something of unusual value while walking along a beach, strolling along a well-traveled road or perhaps while digging in the backyard or in the garden. Perhaps the find was a beautiful stone or seashell, an unusual coin or piece of jewelry; maybe it was a piece of pottery or an old penny.

Fort the past seven years, Fort Wayne resident George Kessen has been spending his winters in St. Petersburg, Florida. He has a dog named “Casey” with whom he has long enjoyed taking walks, whether at home in the Midwest or during the moderate Florida winters. While in St. Petersburg and walking down a street one night with Casey, Kessen noticed something unusual on the pavement. It appeared to be a scapula: He picked it up. A small piece of cloth was affixed to it that bore a reference to Father Solanus Casey. Kessen, a practicing Catholic, had not heard of Father Casey, but felt that something of this value should be returned to its owner. He attempted to locate him through the Diocese of St. Petersburg, the attempt proved futile, but served to apprise him of the priest and his legacy. He researched “Solanus Casey” and found out much about the interesting life that Father Casey had lived in the Midwest, including the Detroit area and even his stay in Huntington. Since the discovery, Kessen has begun praying for the intercession of Father Casey often, and today feels a special spiritual bond with him.

Several months ago, Kessen saw a reference in Today’s Catholic about Father Casey’s Nov. 18 beatification in Detroit. He has since turned the relic over to Father Jacob Runyon and the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to continue the process of its authentication. Although how the piece of cloth came to be in Florida is not yet certain, it could have traveled there with someone who had possessed it or the entire garment.

Interestingly enough, the story does not end there. Four weeks ago, Kessen endured the pain of accidentally breaking his foot. His doctor anticipated an eight-week recuperation period with likely surgery. Kessen was determined to call upon the intercession of Father Casey during the lengthy recovery period. Father Casey regularly prayed for those with physical ailments during his life’s journey. He was well-known for his willingness to help those in need, as well as a willingness to listen to the cares and struggles of those around him, no matter the station in life. He often prayed for healing.

Kessen recently got some good news from the doctor. Strangely, or perhaps predictably, his eight-week recovery period has been shortened to four or five weeks. Understandably, he is quick to point out the many intercessory prayers to Father Solanus Casey and his premature healing. It’s no wonder that he has a special place in his heart for Father Casey. Hearkening back to that walk with his dog Casey and discovery of the relic… Kessen has a special connection, a knowledge, and now perhaps a reason for his discovery on the walk.

He must still wear a fiberglass boot until Nov. 7, but with the swelling gone and surgery averted, Kessen has a special story about the relic he found that has literally changed his life, as well as enlightened his knowledge of Father Solanus Casey, to be beatified and pronounced “blessed” by the church this Nov. 18 in Detroit.

Knights CEO praises plan for U.S. aid to persecuted Christians

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Carl Anderson, CEO of the Knights of Columbus, praised the decision by the Trump administration to provide direct U.S. aid to persecuted Christians in the Middle East and route it through the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The aid will go to “faith-based and private organizations” to help those who are persecuted in the region, according to Vice President Mike Pence, who announced the move in a keynote address at the Oct. 25 Solidarity Dinner for the Washington-based group In Defense of Christians.

U.S. aid to the region had previously been given to the United Nations for distribution in the troubled region, but Pence criticized the U.N. efforts saying they had been ineffective in helping Christians who have suffered at the hands of Islamic State militiamen and other terrorist groups.

A year ago, the United States used the right word to describe what was happening to Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East. That word was genocide. Tonight, those words were put into action,” Anderson said in a statement.

He introduced Pence at the dinner, saying that now was the time to “re dedicate ourselves to the defense of our brothers and sisters in faith — and to defending them in a Christian way with the ethics of love.”

“Despite the efforts of so many, the world witnesses again and again the crimes against humanity and we now describe as genocide,” Anderson told an audience that included elected officials, bishops, priests and other prelates from the U.S. and throughout the Middle East. Pence singled out the Knights of Columbus for “extraordinary work caring for the persecuted around the world.”

“While faith-based groups with proven track records and deep roots in these communities are more than willing to assist, the United Nations too often denies their funding requests,” Pence said. “My friends, those days are over.”

Since 2014, the Knights of Columbus Christian Refugee Relief Fund has donated more than $17 million for humanitarian assistance in Iraq, Syria and the surrounding region.

In August of this year, the Knights launched a drive to raise $2 million to rebuild Karamles, a predominantly Christian town in Iraq that was destroyed by IS. A spokesman for the Knights told CNS Oct. 27 that all the money has been raised and it is committed to the project as announced.

A timeline for rebuilding the town is still to be determined, but the Knights said the project “will result in hundreds of families from Christian and other minority communities to move back to the homes they were evicted from by IS in 2014.”

The Knights documentation of IS atrocities and its advocacy efforts were decisive in the 2016 decision by then-Secretary of State John Kerry to declare the treatment of Christians and other religious minorities in the region as genocide. Current Secretary of State Rex Tillerson reaffirmed that designation earlier this past July.

The Knights of Columbus also will join the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for a “Week of Awareness” for persecuted Christians, which will begin Nov. 26, the feast of Christ the King, with a day of prayer for persecuted Christians.
**Assisting victims of war is a work of mercy, pope says**

**VATICAN CITY** (CNS) — Members of the military and of humanitarian agencies who risk their lives to save others or to alleviate their suffering are precisely those for whom Jesus will say, “Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Pope Francis said, for decades, the Geneva Conventions have tried to establish rules to protect innocent civilians in times of war, yet “atrocious crimes” and shocking violations of human dignity continue to occur, the pope told participants at a conference on international humanitarian law.

The conference was sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Defense and the Carabinieri, Italy’s military police. Pope Francis met Oct. 28 with the 150 conference participants and with 100 officer candidates from the Carabinieri. Despite the ongoing, “praiseworthy attempt” to codify humanitarian law to protect noncombatants, religious and cultural monuments and the environment during periods of strife, the pope said, so many atrocities continue around the globe that it leads to “a certain saturation that anesthetizes and, to some degree, relativizes the seriousness of the problem.”

**On contraception, church must continue to defend life, cardinal says**

**ROME** (CNS) — The acceptance of artificial contraception by some Christian churches and communities beginning in the 1930s has led to the monstrosity of what is today known as procreative medicine, which includes abortion, said German Cardinal Walter Brandmuller.

Inaugurating an Oct. 28 conference marking the 50th anniversary of Blessed Paul VI’s encyclical “Humanae Vitae,” Cardinal Brandmuller told participants that in ignoring traditional church teaching men and women today have seated themselves “on the throne of the Creator.”

In “Humanae Vitae,” published in 1968, Pope Paul underlined the responsibility that goes with human sexuality and marriage. While he taught that couples can space the birth of their children for valid reasons, they must use only natural methods of avoiding fertility. Birth control, he said, causes an “artificial separation” of the unitive and procreative aspects of married love.

In his speech at the Rome conference, Cardinal Brandmuller said that after the Second Vatican Council, the church faced significant pressure — including from within its own ranks — to endorse contraception as “morally justifiable” just as the Anglican Church had done at the 1930 Lambeth Conference and the U.S. Federal Council of Churches, the precursor of the National Council of Churches, did in 1961.

**Reformation at 500: Christians see they are brothers, sisters, pope says**

**VATICAN CITY** (CNS) — The grace of God and decades of ecumenical dialogue have enabled Catholics and Protestants to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation together, emphasizing their shared baptism and faith in Jesus, Pope Francis said.

Welcoming the moderator and participants and with 100 officer candidates from the Carabinieri. Despite the ongoing, “praiseworthy attempt” to codify humanitarian law to protect noncombatants, religious and cultural monuments and the environment during periods of strife, the pope said, so many atrocities continue around the globe that it leads to “a certain saturation that anesthetizes and, to some degree, relativizes the seriousness of the problem.”

**Compassion is contagious, says Pacem honoree**

Widad Akreyi speaks following her acceptance of the Pacem in Terris Peace and Freedom Award Oct. 22 in Davenport, Iowa. As a child living in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, Akreyi, during her first persecution, recalled hearing her mother cry for help as she ran with 5-year-old Widad to safety. Weakened by malnutrition, “my head was dangling from her right arm,” she said. Six years later, war broke out between Iraq and Iran. “During that war, our homeland was attacked three times. By the grace of God, we survived.” That and other experiences of persecution convinced her to commit her life to peace and justice. Bishop Thomas R. Zinkula of Davenport presented the award to Akreyi during a ceremony in Christ the King Chapel on the St. Ambrose University campus.

**Spanish prelates urge unity; some Catalanon Catholics advocate self-rule**

**BARCELONA, Spain** (CNS) — Spanish church leaders reiterated support for their country’s unity as the Madrid government imposed direct control over Catalonia.

However, Catholic organizations in the breakaway region — which declared independence Oct. 27 — condemned the crackdown and warned government actions could have “incalculable consequences.”

Cardinal Ricardo Blazquez Perez of Valladolid, president of the Spanish bishops’ conference, expressed sadness for the Catalanon declaration of independence and reiterated support “for the constitutional order and the restoration, and I ask God for peaceful coexistence among all citizens.”

His statement, issued Oct. 28, came the day after the Spanish government announced it was dismissing Catalonia’s president, Carles Puigdemont, and local officials, and ending the region’s self-government under the terms of Spain’s 1978 constitution.

Spain called for regional elections Dec. 21. Other church leaders also urged unity.

**Vatican Nativity scene to highlight works of mercy**

**VATICAN CITY** (CNS) — The Vatican’s Christmas tree and Nativity scene will feature traditional design and decorations centered on the theme of mercy.

A towering 92-foot spruce tree will be the centerpiece of the Vatican’s Christmas holidays, according to a note released Oct. 25 by the governing office of Vatican City.

The tree, which measures nearly 33 feet in diameter, will be donated by the Archdiocese of Elk, Poland, and transported to the Vatican on a flat-bed truck traveling over 1,240 miles across central Europe, the Vatican said.

The Nativity scene, instead, will be based by the Benedictine Abbey of Montevergine, located in central Europe, the Vatican said.

The tree will be the centerpiece of the Vatican’s Christmas holidays, according to a note released Oct. 25 by the governing office of Vatican City.

**Lebanese cardinal inaugurates New York chapel to St. Charbel**

**NEW YORK** (CNS) — Cardinal Bechara Rai, patriarch of Maronite Catholics, inaugurated a chapel to Lebanon’s St. Charbel in St. Patrick’s Cathedral. The chapel is the first of its kind outside Lebanon. “St. Charbel is a sign of hope for Christianity and for all the people of the Middle East who suffer in difficult circumstances,” Cardinal Rai said in his homily Oct. 28 at a Mass at the cathedral. New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan and Bishop Gregory J. Mansour of the Maronite Eparchy of St. Maron of Brooklyn concelebrated the Mass.

“We are here in New York and the United States to hear the voices that speak to us about the Middle East,” said Cardinal Dolan. The artistic mosaic sanctuary depicts St. Charbel wrapped in a luminous halo in the Lebanese mountain, near the St. Maron monastery in Annaya, Lebanon, where his tomb is located. The saint is surrounded by flourishing trees and clear waters of the Mediterranean, a symbol of spiritual life.
Christ the King inducts National Junior Honor Society class

SOUTH BEND — Christ the King School recently welcomed 12 students to its newly formed National Junior Honor Society chapter during a ceremony at an all-school Mass.

This year’s eighth-grade inductees are Seth Badics, Mackenzie Crane, Becca Dosch, Emily Fenske, Emmanuel Thomas and Kristi Tingwald. Seventh-grade inductees are Jennifer Danh, Ryan Goffinet, Alexis Maneld, Eleanor Munn, Sam Thomas and Aleksey Zielinski.

This is the school’s second year participating in NJHS. Students are eligible for achievement at the end of their sixth- and seventh-grade years for induction the following fall. The adviser is Maureen Terry.

“We are proud to be able to recognize the outstanding scholarship, service, leadership and character of our seventh- and eighth-grade students this year,” Terry said. “Our new members exemplify these pillars, and we know membership in the NJHS will help our already excellent students to strive to do wonderful things in and out of the classroom.”

Students are eligible for NJHS membership based on scholarship, service, leadership and character, and must maintain a cumulative grade percentage of 96 out of 100 at the end of each trimester.

Agencies receive support for initiatives and programming

ELKHART — The board of directors of the Community Foundation of Elkhart County on Oct. 12 approved $850 in new grants to nonprofits serving Elkhart County. Two Catholic entities were among those receiving a Community Investment Grant, Good Neighbor or Rapid Response grant from the Fund for Elkhart County during the first quarter of fiscal year 2017-18.

The award recipients for Youth Development, a subgroup of Community Investment Grants category, included $50,000 to Marian High School, Mishawaka, for an Elkhart bus; and $60,250 to St. John the Evangelist School for a technology project that will provide iPads in the hands of students.

Community Investment Grants address youth development, vibrant community or quality of life issues and respond to requests of $10,000 to $250,000. Submissions are reviewed by volunteer committees and are awarded twice a year. The committees are comprised of a diverse range of community members who are engaged with their respective sectors and work to be aware of emerging and ongoing initiatives.

“Our local nonprofit partners continue to develop programs and initiatives to build stronger communities within Elkhart County,” said Jill Sigshee, Community Foundation grant chairperson. “The Community Foundation is pleased to support these efforts that will positively impact our children and families for generations to come.”

Gold Mass slated for Notre Dame

NOTRE DAME — The inaugural Gold Mass for scientists and engineers at the University of Notre Dame will be celebrated at 8:15 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 15, in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the university campus.

Father Terrence Ehrman, CSC, assistant director of the Center for Theology, Science and Human Flourishing, will preside and preach.

Named for the color of the hoods worn by individuals graduating with a Ph.D. in science, the Gold Mass is also associated with St. Albert the Great, the patron saint of scientists.

While the Gold Mass is a new tradition at Notre Dame, the initial Gold Mass for scientists and engineers was celebrated on Nov. 15, 2016, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The tradition was established by the Society of Catholic Scientists, an idea that grew from a seed planted in a 1988 letter from St. John Paul II to Father George Coyne, SJ, director of the Vatican Observatory. In that letter, the pontiff wrote, “Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish.”

In addition to the Gold Mass, activities include a reception in the galleria of Jordan Hall of Science at 6:15 p.m., and an Edisson Lecture at 7:15 p.m. in Jordan Hall of Science, Room 101. The lecture will address the question of the compatibility of faith and science. The featured speaker is Jonathan Lunine, the David C. Duncan Professor in the Physical Sciences at Cornell University and director of the Cornell Center for Astrophysics and Planetary Sciences. A member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, Lunine is also a founding member and current vice president of the Society of Catholic Scientists.

People of all denominations and faith traditions are welcome to participate.

Men’s conference registration opens

FORT WAYNE — Become fully alive in Christ when by attending the eighth annual Rekindle the Fire Diocesan Men’s Conference on Feb. 24 at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne. Registration is now open at www.rekindlethefire.net.

Conference speakers include world-renowned Theology of the Body expert Christopher West, inspirational storyteller Joe Farris and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades. The day includes opportunities for confession, eucharistic adoration, to visit Catholic vendors and celebrate Mass with Bishop Rhoades.

An early bird registration discount of $40 is available through Dec. 31. After Jan. 1, registration is $45. New this year is special pricing of $25 for middle, high school and college students.

Handel’s ‘Messiah’ to be presented

DONALDSON — The “Messiah,” by George Frideric Handel, will be performed by the Ancilla Domini Community Choir and Orchestra in the Ancilla Domini Chapel at the Center at Donaldson at 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 18. This performance is presented by the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ and the Mary Lou McCarthy-Arzt Concert Series.

There is no admission fee, but a free will offering will be accepted. A reception will follow the performance in Cana Hall, 9601 Union Rd. Visit www.thecenteratdonaldson.org for information.

St. Joseph School Pumpkin Festival

A Pumpkin Festival that took place at St. Joseph School in Garrett in late October offered fellowship for families and celebrated the fall season. The school’s HASA organization hosted and coordinated the event. The children, some dressed in costume, played games, had their faces painted, ate treats and more; family members were offered a homemade meal of chicken and noodles, potatoes and pies. Cash, gift cards, toys and Notre Dame tickets were among the raffle prizes that were given away.

Student ‘saints’ share their faith

Fourth-grade students Claire Bloom and Felicity Barton, from left, dressed as St. Gianna Molla and St. Dorothy of Caesarea, attended the All-Schools Mass at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum in the morning of Oct. 26, then went live on Redeemer Radio’s Sharathon in the afternoon with representatives of their parish. They attend Most Precious Blood School in Fort Wayne.
Losses, grief test couple’s vocation

BY JEANNIE EWING

Grief is multifaceted and often complex. The depth of suffering from loss ranges widely for everyone, but this deep-seated pain is often accompanied by difficult and intense emotions. One’s spiritual experience of grief mingles intricately with the emotional and physiological aspects of moving from what once was to what is no more.

Miscarriage is one such subtype of grief that renders a couple full of emotions, few of which are easily articulated or shared with others. The loss incurred from miscarriage is often a hidden cross, because many times the children lost were so tiny that no body was recovered or buried for closure.

Men and women also process their grief pertaining to miscarriage quite differently, which can put an unwelcome strain on a marriage. But for both, there is a weight always dangling in the air, never able to be grasped; the loss of that presence of a child or children who were never born to earth, who never could run through the home or giggle and play.

The mystery of this type of suffering has not been lost upon Noah and Ruth Smucker of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Goshen, who converted to Catholicism from the Mennonite faith in 2007. Only a couple of years after they were married, they experienced what they call an “unofficial” miscarriage, because it was too early to be certain that they had lost a baby. Yet throughout the subsequent 11 years, they lost a confirmed six babies to miscarriage, and possibly more.

The Smuckers soon learned that multiple miscarriages would yield unprecedented grief in their lives, grief at times too much to bear. “Truthfully, I didn’t take the time to deal with the first miscarriage,” Noah admits. “Emotionally and spiritually, I don’t know how I was doing exactly, but I saw the trauma it was causing Ruth and I was very concerned about that.”

Ruth struggles with wondering about the children who might have been born to earth. “There’s a certain emptiness,” she shared, “because I don’t know what happened in the beginning.” She and Noah decided to quickly try for another baby, because then they wouldn’t have to face the pain of their first loss.

After their second miscarriage — the one they call their first “official” miscarriage, because it was verified by a pregnancy test — Ruth said, “it changed everything. I knew nothing would ever be the same. It was a huge turning point in our lives.”

The pattern continued after a rocky period of time in which Ruth tried to uncover her fertility issues by way of medical care. But the pattern of miscarriages continued. Over the course of five years, the Smuckers lost up to possibly seven more babies. “I was pretty hopeless,” Ruth confessed. “My health deteriorated in all sorts of ways. But through the encouragement of good friends, I got help.”

Ruth said her emotional and spiritual health also suffered tremendously during this time, because “the grief was unbearable.” Noah added, “As we continued to have more miscarriages, I felt as though they turned into a sort of mystery that I would just never be able to understand. I was afraid of obsessing about them, but at the same time I didn’t want to rush the grieving process.”

Throughout their fertility journey, the Smuckers were also still transitioning from their Mennonite faith to Catholicism. They claim the Catholic Church’s teaching against contraception and in favor of natural family planning was a refreshing and welcome insight into their recurrent losses of babies. “Our hope was restored,” said Ruth.

The Smuckers said that opening themselves up to life time after time was an incredible difficulty. They didn’t want to revert to the “contraceptive mentality” they had in the early years of their marriage, yet they couldn’t face the possibility of losing even more children — especially without adequately managing their suffering and health.

“The grief was burning what we had grown in our marriage,” Ruth explained. “It was putting to death what we had already begun. It was that all-consuming.” Yet they courageously opened themselves up to the possibility of another pregnancy in 2016, discerning that God was asking them to trust him and live in the state of their parental vocation.

After discovering that she was pregnant again, Ruth was terrified. “I truly felt I had post-traumatic stress disorder,” she said. There were times when she would just want to lose the baby. Except this time, she didn’t. “I was about 12 weeks along but hadn’t yet taken a pregnancy test,” she shares. “Once I took the test and saw a positive result, I couldn’t believe it. Would we be looking at a later miscarriage, potential stillbirth, or a live baby? I’d never made it that far in any of my other pregnancies.”

Around 16 weeks’ gestation, Noah and Ruth saw their baby daughter, Regina, on ultrasound. It was then they realized the possibility of preparing for a live birth. “I was flabbergasted by what God was doing,” Ruth said. Noah added, “I know that the Bible speaks of the Lord completing the good work that has begun in you. Having Regina was the next step — a continuation of the good work that had begun with the earlier children we’d conceived and lost.”

This year the couple welcomed their first live baby, Regina Anne: but their family will also always consist of the children who have already gone home to heaven.

Today, Regina Anne is 5 months old. The Smuckers say their grief is not gone, just changed. “There’s been a mingling of grief and joy with Regina’s birth,” Ruth explained. “This grief is different than with the miscarriages. Where there was darkness before, now there is this beautiful ray of light that coincides with the reality that Regina won’t know her siblings this side of heaven. But that joy gives light to the darkness.”

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November 5, 2017
TODAY’S CATHOLIC
A visitor on the third Wednesday of the month at St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel Church in Fort Wayne might be taken a little aback when hearing peals of laughter coming from the room where the Touchstone Grief Support Group meets.

"Often, we share special memories of our loved ones and those who can certainly be humorous," said Donna Gleason, one of the three facilitators of the group. "Or maybe something special about the loved one — those can be humorous, too. One minute we are all crying, and the next, we can be laughing. Both tears and laughter are healing for our souls. One lady told us that she told her friends, 'I never thought I'd be laughing in a grief group!' But we do."

The group had its beginnings in 2004, thanks to Carolyn Sorg and Father Ed Erpelding. "I had heard about a grief ministry from some Michigan friends who were very involved in theirs," said Sorg, a parishioner of the church. "When I came home I asked Father Ed if we had anything like that at our parish. He said no, but that I could start one, so I began gathering information from my friends at church as to who would be interested in helping me. As my Michigan friends said, 'You cannot do this by yourself.'

"Five people said 'yes' immediately, and I've been very blessed to have such wonderful people to help me. We all went to hear Dr. Alan Wolfelt speak and bought his book, 'Understanding Your Grief.' Then we had Dar Richardson come and speak at our parish and went from there. We've been meeting every month since then."

Though the group started out with six members, three have moved on. The original facilitators of what came to be called the Touchstone Grief Support Group have remained: Sorg, Gleason and Kathy Hartman.

Father William Kummer, the current pastor of St. Joseph - Hessen Cassel, has been appreciative of the group's impact.

"When a person is facing a heartfelt loss the sadness, sorrow and the sense of being 'nowhere' is devastating," said Father Kummer. "The group does two things that affect the parish: No. 1, when we don't know how to share our compassion and cannot find the words, our support group does; and No. 2, the support group prevents our loved ones who are in emotional pain from falling through the cracks. Jesus Christ, who is the reason for our parish, who cares for the sorrowing, is made real.

"The reaction that I have gotten is minimal, for everything is private and confidential. Of course, we do hear 'Thank you' and occasionally hear a word of praise for those who lead the meetings. I am happy that we have this service available for the grieving families, especially those who have lost a child and for those who die too young."

Sorg receives immense satisfaction when people tell her that they really learn a lot at the meetings, and the friendships made enable others to also help those who are grieving.

Gleason, who was new to the parish when the ministry began, emphasized a critical point.

"We are not counselors. That's important. I have been a 'facilitator' at Erin's House (for grieving children and their families) for nine years. That's pretty much what we do at our grief group at St. Joe: We facilitate those in attendance to help each other. Everyone is at a different point in his or her journey.

"I have not lost a spouse or a child, but grief support is primarily listening to another's feelings and letting them tell you the 'story' about their loved one and their loss of the person. Dr. Wolfelt's philosophy is 'companionship' of the grieving. We don't have answers, not can we fix it, but we can accompany a mourner along their journey through the grief wilderness."

He has many wonderful books on grief, and D.O. McComb and Sons Funeral Home has a lending library on Lake Avenue that is also helpful.

One of the group's participants began writing poetry to express his feelings, said Gleason, and he is extremely good.

"During our meetings, we will be discussing something, and someone will point to him and say, 'Can you write a poem about it for next month?' and he always does," said Gleason. "We're trying to encourage him to print them, so don't be surprised if you come across a compilation of poems for the Bereaved in the future."

The group's mission is to companion others in their walk through grief, to be a blessing to those who mourn, to give hope when all hope seems lost and to help heal the physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual realms of suffering.

"We, as a team, encourage the bereaved to pray and never give up on God," concluded Sorg. "He always does," said Gleason. "We're not there for us if we just ask for his help. We do not know why things happen the way they do. We have to trust God. Things do not change overnight, so you have to be patient and take one day at a time. Also, our team is always there for them for comfort and support."
Holy Cross Parish educates the mind and the heart

BY CLAIRE KENNEY

The Congregation of Holy Cross has very much impacted the South Bend community. Decades ago, the congregation, founded by Blessed Basil Anthony Moreau, came to America from France and began to establish roots in South Bend. Well-known for its emphasis on comprehensive education, that is, the formation of not only the intellectual, but also the conscience, the congregation founded various parish and school communities in the area, Holy Cross Parish and Holy Cross School among them.

Holy Cross is a tight-knit faith community located on the west side of South Bend. Founded in 1929, the parish continues to be overseen by priests of the Congregation of Holy Cross. Currently, Father Vincent Coppola, CSC, serves as the parish’s pastor, supported by Father Michael Couhig, CSC, and Father Edmund Sylvia, CSC.

Though the school, once staffed by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, is now led by laity, the congregation’s long-standing history of fusing faith and intellectual learning remains baked into the overarching community culture. As a result, the parish often collaborates with the school, and vice versa.

“There is a close relationship between the parish and our school, and our principal sits on several of our committees to keep everyone up to date,” Father Sylvia said.

“All of our priests — Father Vince, Father Ed, and Father Mike — are involved in all aspects of the school, supporting teachers, students and parents to the fullest. As a matter of fact, every day, one of them is greeting the students by the front door as they arrive each morning at school.”

Nancy Takach has a long-standing personal and professional history with the Holy Cross parish and school community. Currently serving as the parish administrative assistant, she said that Holy Cross has always been welcoming to her, even before she became Catholic.

“Though I was not raised Catholic and did not attend Holy Cross School, I have had a feeling of belonging because I grew up in the Holy Cross neighborhood. ‘It’s a special place to be. I even remember the school song!’”

Ministering to both the Catholic and non-Catholic school families is an example of how the parish and school work together.

“The parish sees the school as a vital mission to evangelize parishioner children, as well as nonparishioners and non-Catholic families whose children attend our school,” Budzinski said. Holy Cross Parish initiates learning opportunities within the parish community.

“To foster education in the parish we have just become part of formed.org, put out by the Augustine Institute out of Denver, Colorado,” Father Sylvia said. Parishes and individuals subscribe to the Formed website in order to gain access to tools to grow in faith by learning. The parish also offers various opportunities for ministry as a way to practice virtue. These ministries include giving back through music — such as participating as a member of the choir, as an instrumentalist, or as a cantor — altar serving, serving as an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, lecturing, volunteering at the Lenten Soup Supper, ministering to the surrounding local community as a member of the Holy Cross Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and serving on the catechetical team.

“Throughout our history, our mission has been to share in the Church’s mission by working as educators in the faith,” says the Congregation of Holy Cross’ website, “in all of our ministries, whether schools, parishes, or other works of missionary outreach and social justice, we serve side-by-side with our collaborators through educating hearts and minds and building communities of the coming kingdom.” It’s evident that Holy Cross Parish and School live this mission of fostering comprehensive education in a collaborative manner.

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Moving Forward Rehabilitation
Social justice is the heartbeat of Notre Dame parish

BY CLAIRE KENNEY

W ell-known for its commitment to social justice and located on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, Sacred Heart Parish is steeped in history. In fact, the parish website notes, it “is the oldest continuous parish founded and staffed by the Congregation of Holy Cross.”

The parish church has been housed in various structures on Notre Dame’s campus since the parish’s founding. Today it rests underneath the university’s Basilica of the Sacred Heart, which was deemed a minor basilica by St. John Paul II in 1992, in a structure known as the “Crypt.” The Crypt is much simpler than the ornate and decorative basilica upstairs, and its smaller and simpler decor provides an intimate setting for prayer.

Father David Scheidler, CSC, is the current pastor of Sacred Heart Parish. Before the appointment, Father Scheidler worked in various other capacities for the university, including as associate rector of the basilica, chaplain for the university’s Folk Choir and its Alliance for Catholic Education, and as rector of one of the institution’s residence halls, St. Edward. He has also served elsewhere and in places such as Niles, Illinois; Goodyear, Arizona; and Monterrey, Mexico.

Due to the church’s location, Sacred Heart parishioners tend to be those associated with the university or the basilica itself. Father Scheidler said that as Notre Dame’s campus and surrounding area “grow and evolve, we seem to be attracting younger families.” He enjoys having these families included in the community, and also likes that Notre Dame students get involved in parish life as well. “We have graduate students in the Sacred Music department who help out with our choir, which adds such a wonderful and professional element to our liturgical celebration,” he said. “We have Notre Dame students who volunteer with our religious education and who participate in our daily Masses.”

Father Scheidler collaborates with Sacred Heart’s Pastoral Council, which consists of 10 members and five committee and commission members. Paul Thornton is the president of the Pastoral Council. For Thornton, his work on the council is an avenue for giving back.

“Being president of the Pastoral Council for me, is an act of love for our pastor and the parishioners of this great parish,” Thornton said.

Parish members put their faith into action by serving the larger South Bend and surrounding community. The Social Justice Ministry Commission offers many activities to give back, from adopting a family for Christmas to working at a local food pantry to the Dismas House ministry, which helps people who are returning to society from incarceration make positive contributions as citizens. “This parish is full of faithful Catholics with a passion for social justice and peace initiatives,” Father Scheidler said.

Steve Good, chairman of the Social Justice Ministry and a 1964 graduate of Notre Dame, says that the opportunities for volunteering through social justice activities are popular among a wide array of age groups. Some volunteer their time and talent, others choose to give to the parish’s social justice initiatives monetarily.

Thornton believes that the parish’s social justice work is important and that the space designated for the community’s prayer is integral to the work. “From the Crypt church in the lower level of the basilica at Notre Dame, Sacred Heart parishioners get the spiritual strength to perform many of their services to the needy in our community,” he said. “Faithful service is what we’re all about.”
Women’s retreat seeks to deepen the gift of faith

BY JILL A. BOUGHTON

Catholic women in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend will have the opportunity Dec. 1-3 to further explore the faith they received at baptism during the third Rejoice! Women’s Retreat at Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center, Donaldson.

The theme for the retreat, taken from 1 Peter 1:7, is “Faith, More Precious Than Gold.”

Retreat leader and featured speaker Sister Ann Shields, SGL, is already praying that each retreatant’s faith comes alive, so that what she affirms at Mass during the retreat can blossom in every aspect of the participant’s daily life. “I don’t think we fully grasp the power available to us in the Word of God and the sacraments,” Sister Shields said.

The retreat begins at 6:45 p.m. Friday and ends at 2 p.m. Sunday. On Saturday evening, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades will lead a guided meditation and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. There will be ample time during the retreat for corporate and personal prayer and adoration, but also relaxed time for fellowship with other retreatants.

Vanessa Froux and other young women from St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Fort Wayne, will lead the music.

The beginning of Advent is a good time to come apart and set the right tone for the season and the new liturgical year. The busier a woman is, the more she needs a retreat like this, as Sister Shields told Redeemer Radio interviewer Kyle Heimann. “We’re living in a world that’s full of noise. But every human being needs quiet time. There’s nothing selfish about giving God his rightful place and the opportunity to speak to our hearts.”

In Sister Shields’ words, the first diocesan Rejoice! retreat in December 2015, with a Marian theme: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46-47). Reflecting on that experience, she said, “It was delightful being there. The women were eager and attentive, and I believe it bore good fruit in your diocese.”

Debbie Herbeck led the second retreat last year, with a theme drawn from Lamentations 3:22-23: “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end.” However, new participants are welcomed every year.

St. Jude parishioner Jan Torma had the idea of planning a diocesan women’s retreat as she was praying about Pope Francis’ words to the 37th National Convention of Renewal in the Spirit last June 2014. The pope told participants, “This is your definition: a current of grace.” He reminded them, “This is the foundation: to adore God. Seek sanctity in the new life of the Holy Spirit. Be dispensers of the grace of God.”

Torma had also been moved by Pope Benedict XVI’s words in his apostolic letter “Ubicomque et Semper”: “At the root of all evangelization, there is not a human plan of expansion, but the desire to share the inestimable gift that God has willed to give us, making us sharers in his own life.”

Sister Shields belongs to Servants of God’s Love, a diocesan women’s religious order in the diocese of Lansing, Michigan, founded to bring God’s love where it is most needed in this particular time. Their current work includes teaching in four Catholic schools, caring for foster children and providing a home for the elderly who have no family and no financial means. In the early years of Emmanuel House, Sister Shields was sitting beside a dying woman who had been unresponsive for some time. She said to her, “Helen, when you see the Lord, remember us!” Helen opened her eyes and answered, “Every day before the throne of God, I’ll thank him for the Servants of God’s Love.”

Sister Shields led her first retreats at Franciscan University of Steuben ville in 1975. She has preached all over the world as part of Renewal Ministries. She said it was very moving to meet believers in Eastern Europe who had suffered under communism, and to helping to participate in the lively worship of African and Latin American Catholics, who gave her much more than she brought them.

She has authored several books, including “Deeper Conversion,” “To Be Like Jesus,” and “More of the Holy Spirit.” However, she said that her most satisfying ministry over the past 25 years has been a 15-minute radio program, “Food for the Journey,” based on the Mass readings for each weekday.

Broadcast worldwide, the program provides nourishment for people carrying heavy crosses. “I often read emails from listeners, on my knees,” she said. “They have no idea how holy they are!”

Members of the planning team for the retreat are Torma; Carol Miller, St. Matthew Cathedral parishioner and retired pastoral minister at Marian High School; Mary Glowaski, director of the diocesan Office of Evangelization; and Cecilia Aguilar-Tussey, assistant in the Office of Evangelization. For more information visit www.diocesefwsb.org/rejoice.

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Harvey Weinstein’s not alone

Harvey Weinstein is a pig. It’s not language I would normally use in a column, but the cascade of revelations about his treatment of women and men, most particularly his twisted and apparently constant sexual advances, demands a blunt assessment. The accusations that have topped this modern-day Romeo Mogul for making for disturbing reading every morning at the breakfast table.

The exposure of his predatory bullying in this age of predatory bullies has had at least a few benefits, however.

First, it has limited an explosion of confessions on the part of women in the entertainment as well as other professions. I might say all professions. The #MeToo hashtag makes for harrowing reading, a rolling tide of upsetting, at times horrifying, anecdotes that can easily fill a reader with a nagging fear for man’s inhumanity to woman.

While many of us, God willing, make our way through our days without harassing or being harassed, it is clear that many of our sisters (and some of our brothers) are not so fortunate. God has not only made them, but has also put them in a position necessary to remain silent for so long speaks not just for the abuser’s retaliation, but also to the fear that the rest of us will turn away.

As we Catholics have seen in the clergy sexual abuse crisis, this fear is not unfounded. Of this fear is not unfounded. In the wake of Weinstein’s rapid fall. This is an industry that has helped to sexualize our nation. The steady coarsening of humor, the increasingly graphic scenes, the relentless glorification embedded in everything from “family comedies” to historical

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time Matthew 23:1-12

The Book of Malachi provides this weekend’s first reading. The prophet’s name, Malachi, reveals his role. In Hebrew it means “messenger of God.” As a prophet, he brought God’s message to the people. Often in prophetic writings, as in this weekend’s reading, the prophets wrote in a way in which God spoke in the first person. The prophets presented themselves merely as earthly instruments through whom God spoke, but the actual communication was God. Malachi did not write at a time of crisis for God’s people, as was the case for other prophets, or when life was filled with peril and despair. Malachi, nevertheless, shared with all the prophets the opinion that when the people were sluggish in their religious observance, or when they altogether had rejected God, they risked their own well-being.

Lack of fervor, in the estimates of the prophets, was the height of ingratitude. By contrast, God always was merciful, always faithful to the Covenant. Malachi’s reading, again with God’s words given in the first person, accuses the people of sin. God is the perfect and all-knowing judge. He is merciful, but God does not prevent people from sinning. It is their choice. He also does not interrupt the cycle of repeating sinning.

St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Thessalonians supplies the second reading. In this reading, Paul speaks to the Christians of Thessalonica, to whom the letter is addressed, that he cares deeply for them and especially for their spiritual vitality. Essential to these feelings of care and love has been Paul’s proclamation of the Gospel. He could do nothing greater for the Thessalonians than to share with them the saving story of Jesus. For its third reading, the church presents St. Matthew’s Gospel. This passage is the last in a series of stories in which Jesus discusses, or argues, with the Pharisees or with others. As often happens elsewhere in the Gospels, Jesus denounces the Pharisees’ hypocrisy.

The Pharisees were learned in Jewish law and tradition, usually occupying central places in synagogues, regarded as persons very knowledgeable in religious matters, hence the Lord’s reference to the “chair of Moses.” Still, they were humans, subject to temptation. They were not perfect, and they knew it if they were intellectually honest. Humans always are insecure and confused, burdened by their inadequacies. It is the compensatory, to convince themselves or others of superiority, humans often seek places of privilege, or control over others.

Jesus tells the disciples to serve others. He calls them to be bold. He encourages them. With God’s grace, nothing needs to be feared.

Reflection

For weeks, in these biblical readings from St. Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus has assumed the role of the final authority, of the ultimate judge. Jesus pronounces on the most supreme of all laws, the law of Moses. For Matthew, Jesus judges as the Son of God, in a position to pronounce on anything and everything. Matthew depicts Jesus always presenting the wisest and most reasonable of judgments on matters that usually perplex others.

In this weekend’s Gospel, Jesus directly addresses the most insidious of human inadequacies: the deep fear within us all that, even unwittingly, will make mistakes and pay the price. Be strong, the Master admonishes. There is nothing to fear. Be sincere. Follow the Lord in confidence.

Supporting this view are the readings from First Thessalonians and from Malachi. God always is with us in mercy, love, guidance and protection. He sent to us the prophets, the Apostles, and of course Jesus. Still, God does not overwhelm us. We voluntarily must turn to God. We must hear God. We must love God. Always cripplling us will be our embedded fears and defenses, and in conquering self, we do not leave ourselves at risk. God strengthens us.

READINGS

Which reformation? What reform?  

Despite the formulation you heard before and after the Oct. 31 quincentenary of Luther’s 95 theses, there was no single “reformation” to which the Catholic “Counter-Reformation” was the similarly unicolored response. Rather, as Yale historian Carlos Eire shows in his eminently readable and magisterial work, “Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450 – 1650,” there were multiple, contesting reformations in play in the first centuries of modernity. 

There was the reformation of European intellectual life led by humanists steeped in the Greek and Roman classics: men like the Dutchman Erasmus (whose scholarship deeply influenced those who would become known as “Protestants” before they broke with Rome) and Thomas More (who urged Erasmus to deepen his knowledge of Greek, the church fathers, and the Old Testament in its original language). There were at least four major flavors of “Protestant” reformation — Lutheranism, Zwinglian, Radical, and Calvinist — and plenty of subdivisions within those categories. There were impressive preachers — and plenty of subdivisions — and subdivided pulpits — and plenty of subdivisions among those pulpits — that they might speak out of history with devastating results. The 500th anniversary of one of the emblematic acts in this cultural tsunami of reforms should lead to a deepening of ecumenical dialogue about what these many early modern reformers wrought — and not just for the world, but primarily for the church. That deepened conversation would do well to focus on what makes for authentic “reform” in the church.

In the fall issue of Plough, the quarterly of the Bruderhof Community, I propose that all authentic reform in the church must begin from a recovery of some part of the church’s essential “form” or constitution (in the British sense), which was given to the church by Christ. True ecclesial reform is thus always re-form. It is not something we make up by our own cleverness. It does not mean surrender to the spirit of the age. It does not involve substituting our judgment for God’s revelation. True Christian reform always involves bringing into the present something the church has laid aside or misplaced, and making that Christ-given something into an instrument of renewal. (The full article is available here: https://www.plough.com/en/topicsfaith/discipleship/re-forming-the-church). And how, on this quincentenary of the reformers’ theses, should we measure the authenticity of renewal? The evangelical criterion seems decisive here. If the reform and renewal in question really does restore to the church something of Christ-given “form,” then the results will be evident evangelically — in an increased harvest of souls who have come to know the Lord Jesus, who walk in his ways, and who share the gift that they have been given with others, thereby healing a broken and often death-dealing culture. By the same criterion, empty church growth, muddled evangelization, and often death-dealing culture. By the same criterion, empty church growth, muddled evangelization, and often death-dealing culture. By the same criterion, empty church growth, muddled evangelization, and often death-dealing culture. By the same criterion, empty church growth, muddled evangelization, and often death-dealing culture.

George Weigel is Distinguished Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

ERLANGDON, from page 13

epics, suggest that reality is a nonstop orgy.

Fantasy is increasingly portrayed as reality, and the impact on our culture has been predictably devastating — not just in the dens of the sophisticated, but in the suburbs and the small towns, in rural and urban areas. We are drowning in the fantasies of a thousand Harvey Weinsteins.

All of this is a reminder of our fallen nature. While “reality TV” is not real, sin is. The great insight of Christian realism is that we are all sinners. It is only the sin of pride that makes us think we are somehow immune to its corruption.

This realism is what undergirds the solid pastoral wisdom in the church about avoiding temptation — not putting ourselves into situations of moral risk. We are all adults, it is true, but that makes it all the more important that we recognize the temptation to reduce others to our fantasies and needs.

For all of us, single or married, chastity is a virtue worth our fantasies and needs.

Greg Elsandon, director and editor-in-chief of Catholic News Service, can be reached at gelsondan@catholicnews.com.

NIEZER, from page 13

also pray for all people: that our relationships may be centered on Christ, and that together we may all lead each other to a conversion of heart and, most importantly, salvation in heaven.

Daniel Nieser is currently discerning the priesthood at Simon Brute College seminary and Marian University in Indianapolis.

The Catholic Difference

November 5, 2017

Matthew 23:1-12

Following is a word search based on the Gospel for 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A: a teaching about those who seek honor. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.


HONOR


SCRIPTE Bohemian CrossWord

November 5 and 12, 2017


crossword.jpg


ACROSS

1. Farming club (abr.)
2. Herr’s wife
3. Branch of learning
4. Cook’s garb
5. Chick sound
6. 70s hairstyle
7. Leaf for garments
8. Outlaw
9. “I am the door”
10. Fail to reach
11. Sin
12. “Mary’s color”
13. Another word for flying saucer
14. Possessive pronoun
15. An accent for The Cross
16. Temple veil was
17. Floor cleaner (2 wds.)
18. Outlaw
19. Most of hosts
20. John did to tomb
21. Foul to reach
22. Chubby winged infant
23. Flying saucer
24. Sleigh
25. Rosary month
26. 70s hairstyle
27. Charged particle
28. Talismans
29. Leather worker’s tool
30. Minnesota’s capital
31. “I am the door”
32. Stalk
33. Moray
34. Sleigh
35. Cat toainment
36. Jacob’s son
37. “Tie up heavy”
38. ’Round the clock
39. Miracles
40. Sleigh
41. Miracles
42. Rosary month
43. Sleigh
44. Stalk
45. Leather worker’s tool
46. Sleigh
47. Central points

DOWN

1. “my sheep”
2. “He’s wife”
3. “The laborers are...”
4. “The laborers are...”
5. “The laborers are...”
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46. “The laborers are...”
47. “The laborers are...”

Answer Key can be found on page 15

Daniel Nieser is currently discerning the priesthood at Simon Brute College seminary and Marian University in Indianapolis.
Craft show supports fine arts
FORT WAYNE — St. Charles Borromeo School Fine Arts Boosters will host a craft show Saturday, Nov. 4, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., in the school, 4910 Trier Rd. There will be crafts of all kinds as well as lunch available.

Craft show planned for fall
FORT WAYNE — Most Precious Blood will host a craft show Saturday, Nov. 4, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., in the school, 1529 Barthold St. There will be crafts, a bake sale, snack bar and more.

St Anthony de Padua holiday craft bazaar
SOUTH BEND — St. Anthony de Padua Parish is sponsoring a Holiday Craft Bazaar on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the school auditorium, 2310 East Jefferson Blvd. Vendors from all over Michiana. Free parking and concessions will be available.

Annual Snowflake bazaar
HUNTINGTON — The St. Mary Church Rosary Sodality will hold a Snowflake Bazaar and Bake Sale on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and after all Masses on Sunday, Nov. 5, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, in the gymnasium, 903 N. Jefferson St. Crafts, bake sale and raffle with a soup, sandwich and apple dumpling lunch served on Saturday only at 11 a.m.

St Mary Christmas bazaar
AVILLA — St. Mary Parish, 232 N. Main St., will have a Christmas bazaar on Sunday, Nov. 5, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Craft table and homemade sweets. Cookie decorating and door prizes.

Saint Joseph High School plans open house
SOUTH BEND — An open house will be Nov. 5, from 1-3 p.m. at Saint Joseph High School, 453 N. Notre Dame Ave. Tour the school, visit with students and meet the faculty, administrators and coaches. Explore the academic programs and co-curricular athletic, service and spiritual opportunities Saint Joseph offers. For information contact Sue Uhler, Director of Admissions, at susuh@stjohnhigh.com.

Turkey bingo
FORT WAYNE — Turkey bingo will be Sunday, Nov. 5, at St. Peter’s Parish Pavilion, 506 E. DeWald St. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. Bingo games start at noon. Snacks will be available.

Day of Reflection
MISHAWAKA — A day of reflection will be held at St. Francis Convent Wednesday, Nov. 8, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The theme for the day is “The Psalms.” Bring a Bible. The cost of the day is $20 and includes lunch. Register with Sister Barbara Anne Hallman at 574-259-5427.

NOW HIRING: Music Director
Saint Mary of the Annunciation Church in Bristol is looking for a part-time OR full-time Music Director. Applicant must be available to provide music for three Masses each weekend, as well as funerals, weddings, holidays and Holy Days. Applicant must be able to sing, cantor, and play the piano and organ and must also possess the skills necessary to develop and work with adult and young adult choirs. Salary negotiable. Interested persons should send a resume to Father Bob Van Kempen at announcementchurch-bristol@outlook.com or Saint Mary of the Annunciation, P.O. Box 246, Bristol, IN 46507.

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Some of those youngsters come from San Ignacio Catholic High School in San Juan. Father Andres Vall Serra, the Jesuit school’s pastoral director, told CNS that the school has a special project to immerse students in providing aid to the poor. It is a class titled “Magis,” which basically means universal good, or “what can one do to reach the good of all,” based on the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. “Every Friday, all students from one grade’s class are sent out to distribute filtration systems and food to poor communities,” said Father Vall. “It’s a moment that allows them to encounter Christ, but in a way that helps transform them.”

The charity project has a grade-specific mental health counseling component, aimed to help students cope with the stress brought on by Hurricane Maria’s effects.

Alvaro Carrillo, a senior at San Ignacio, spoke about how a Catholic-oriented education has helped prepare him for disasters such as hurricanes, noting “the emphasis on community impact and internal growth as a person. I mean being compassionate (in order) to recognize the world’s needs and how to react to situations like this one.”

“This school has focused us on its Jesuit motto, ‘Men at the service of others.’” said senior Ricardo Sanchez. “It was here, in seventh grade, where I started going out to help communities in need.”

San Ignacio reopened Oct. 5, the first Catholic school to do so in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, said Father Vall. It was moderately damaged, mostly by falling trees. Its basement amphitheater and several storage units underground were flooded.

“We are at time of national mourning, trauma, after the passing of two hurricanes ... the consequences on the mood, the spirit, the emotions (of the people) are deep,” said Archbishop Gonzalez, adding that “another trauma is that of shared love and solidarity.”

He agreed with several pastors who had told CNS that, after Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, Mass attendance has risen sharply, although many still could not leave their homes because of the damage. “But yes, there’s a spiritual rebirth,” he said.

Church finances have been severely impacted in Puerto Rico by Hurricane Maria. As businesses and factories shut down, families’ economic stability has been affected. Their financial demands have increased to cover repairs and replacement of lost property.

“We can neither ask nor expect that they continue the same level of support (to the church) when they themselves are barely surviving,” said Archbishop Gonzalez. “In time, we have to see how we deal with sustaining parishes that can’t sustain themselves, as well as our (television) Channel 13 and radio stations.”

However, the archbishop stressed that “our focus now is direct assistance. Most people need water, food, clothing. That’s our primary mission.”

“The top challenge the church in Puerto Rico faces is to nurture the soul (of) our people with God’s word, Jesus’ presence through our works of charity, solidarity, celebrating the Eucharist and maintaining a perspective that keeps us anchored, in reality of these tragic events and full of hope for the strength that the Holy Spirit gives us,” said Archbishop Gonzalez.